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### The Federal Diary

# Presidential Power to Adjust Civilian and Military Pay Urged

By Jerry Kluttz

The President would be given broad authority to fix Federal civilian and military salaries under a plan unveiled yesterday by Civil Service Chairman John W. Macy before the House Pay Subcommittee.

Under the proposal, Congress would retain the authority to set major pay policies and to review and hold hearings on the President's proposals to adjust salaries of an estimated 5.5 million civilian and military personnel.

**Chairman Morris K. Udall** (D-Ariz.) explained that he was holding hearings to try to get all concerned to think about a Federal pay policy that would be equitable for both the employees and the Government. He doesn't expect legislation in this area until next year.

Udall said he was inclined toward some sort of semiautomatic salary adjustment system to guarantee Federal employees pay rates comparable to those in private industry for similar jobs.

He anticipated objections by some employee leaders who would prefer to deal directly with Congress and who fear the President and his advisers

would treat them less generously.

Macy insisted that the plan he had in mind would guarantee employee unions adequate consultation during every step of the salary-fixing process, and an opportunity to carry their appeals to Congress.

The proposal he presented, Macy stressed, would reduce the time lag, now at least a year, between wage studies by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the effective dates of salary adjustments, and would end long congressional hearings and floor debates on details of pay raises. The CSC Chairman also suggested:

- That the military pay and allowance system be converted to a system similar to the civilian pay system.
- That an objective study be made of the application of the locality-rate pay system to clerical jobs in the classified service and also to mail-handling jobs in the postal service.
- That postal trade and craft jobs such as laborers, auto mechanics, equipment repairmen and the like be transferred to the new coordinated Federal wage system for salary-fixing purposes.
- That the

veys that compare Federal pay rates with those in industry be broadened to include "total compensation"; that is the cost of fringe benefits such as retirement, paid leave, etc. Macy estimated these supplemental benefits in Government amount to 23.8 per cent of payroll.

**House Actions:** The House is scheduled to debate Wednesday bills to increase by several hundred the number of super-grade positions for which salaries of up to \$28,000 can be paid, and to place the Civil Service retirement system on a sounder financial basis.

The Senate has passed two super-grade bills and both are pending before the House. The retirement bill isn't likely to get out of the Senate even if the House approves it. Among other things it would increase to 7 per cent retirement deductions for both the employees and their agencies.

The House yesterday passed these bills and sent them to the Senate:

- To pay allowances to about 1200 employees of the Army Engineers who are engaged in floating plant operations on vessels;
- To pay allowances up to

\$10 a day to employees who must commute daily to remote work sites such as Atomic Energy's Nevada test site;

- To authorize postal inspectors to make arrests without a warrant under certain circumstances, and to serve warrants and subpoenas. The inspectors had assumed these powers until a recent court decision struck them down.

The House rejected an effort to bring construction workers under Federal safety standards on job sites involving Federal funds. Members voted 196 to 126 for the bill, but fell short of the two-thirds majority required under a short-cut procedure in effect at the time.

**Food Charge:** The Veterans Administration has changed its long-standing rule and hereafter will charge food service employees only for any food they eat. It had charged the employees for one meal a day whether they ate it or not.

The VA change was announced by Personnel Director Irene Parsons to the conventions last week of the American Federation of Government Employees and the National Federation of Federal Employees. Both unions had sought the change for years.